



FACT SHEET

Disposing or Reuse of Sandbags from Floods



The Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection (DEP) has specific guidelines for proper disposal or reuse of sandbags used during severe storms and flooding. DEP wants flood-affected Kentuckians to be aware of health, safety, and compliance hazards associated with handling and disposal of used sandbags and sand from floods.

Once the danger of rising flood waters is over, clean-up efforts begin for local residents. Questions may arise about the proper disposal of soiled and unsoiled sandbags. Please use this quick reference guide to assist with answering questions about proper sandbag disposal after a flood event has occurred.

Sandbags and sand should be managed depending on the type of bag and what has come in contact with the bags; the quality of flood waters; any additives used in the sand; and the possible use, reuse or disposal of the bag and the sand.

Use Caution

- Sand that has been contaminated by oil-based or fuel products, hazardous chemicals, salt, sewage or septic waste can cause impacts on public health and the environment if they are not handled properly.
- Sand that came in contact with flood waters may contain more bacteria than normal soil.
- **Due to the possible health impacts above, it is strongly recommended that the sand not be placed in playgrounds, sandboxes or other areas of direct human contact.**

Disposal of Sandbags

- Proper sandbag disposal varies based on what has come into contact with the sandbags.

Soiled Sandbags or Sand:

- Empty or full sandbags of sand/dirt which have come into contact with chemicals, wastes, fuel, oil, salt, sewage or septic tank waste could negatively impact the environment. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that they be disposed of at a municipal landfill or other approved facility. Call your local landfill disposal site for detailed disposal instructions

Disposal of Sandbags Continued...

Unsoiled Sandbags and Sand:

- Unused empty sandbags can be saved for future use.
- Full unsoiled sandbags can be emptied and the unsoiled sand can be used as general fill.
- Once sand has been removed from sandbags, the empty unsoiled bags can be reused, recycled or disposed of to avoid litter. The sand may be reused in an area where fill placement is not prohibited, such as a base for concrete. Sand also can be stored and used for winter road sand, fill, or concrete or mortar sand.
- With landfill operator approval, sand may be sent to a municipal landfill for use as daily cover.

Reminder:

It is strongly recommended to not use the sand from sandbags to fill children's sandboxes or playgrounds, as it is not high-quality sand and the sandbags may have been contaminated.

For questions regarding proper disposal of sandbags and other flood-related debris, please contact DEP staff as indicated below:

Department for Environmental Protection
200 Fair Oaks Lane, 1st Floor, Frankfort KY 40601
Division for Air Quality Phone: 502-564-3999 Fax: 502-564-4666
E-mail: air@ky.gov Web site: <http://air.ky.gov/>
Division of Waste Management Phone: 502-564-6716 Fax: 502-564-4049
E-mail: waste@ky.gov Web site: <http://waste.ky.gov/>

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